

Agenda setting diaspora: a comparative analysis of news article coverage on BERSIH 3.0 by keadilandaily.com and umnoonline.com

ABSTRACT

The increase use of the new media as an alternative media in the landscape of Malaysia's politics have open up spaces and chances to examine the adoption of agenda setting theory by the online newspaper owners. The rally of BERSIH 3.0 which took place on the 28th April 2012 organised by the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH), was seen not only as a rally to demand for a clean and fair election in Malaysia, but was also seen as a political move by the opposition parties in wooing the support of the Malaysian public towards their establishment and advancing their agenda setting diaspora through new media channel which is claimed to be free and non-partisan by the authority. This study is attempting to identify the orientation of agenda setting diaspora (construct) by two websites in disseminating their messages on BERSIH 3.0. The two websites of www.keadilandaily.com and www.umnoonline.com were selected for the study as the former owned by the main opposition party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat - PKR) and, the later owned by a dominating ruling party (United Malays National Organization - UMNO). A total of 124 news articles on BERSIH 3.0 published by [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com) and [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com) for fifteen days starting from 21st April 2012 to 5th May 2012 (one week before and one week after BERSIH 3.0 rally) were analysed. Out of 124 news articles, 77 were published by [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com) and another 47 news articles were published by [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com). The results indicated that firstly, the positive portrayal of theme credibility of BERSIH 3.0 is significantly delivered more by [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com) as compared to [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com). Secondly, the neutral portrayal of theme credibility of BERSIH 3.0 is significantly disseminated more by [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com) as compared to [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com). And finally, the negative portrayal of theme credibility of BERSIH 3.0 is significantly adopted more by [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com) as compared to [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com). These results noted that the orientations and the reflections of agenda setting constructs by the two news websites of www.keadilandaily.com and www.umnoonline.com on the coverage of BERSIH 3.0 rally is contradictory in nature, as [keadilandaily.com](http://www.keadilandaily.com) adopted a more balanced and justified approach by having objective and proactive presentation of theme portrayal for the majority of its news articles. While, [umnoonline.com](http://www.umnoonline.com) is adopting a more conservative and stereotype-approach presentation by having more negative portrayal of theme on its news articles on BERSIH 3.0.

Keyword: New media; Politics in Malaysia; Agenda setting; BERSIH 3.0